

12 Follow-up

This chapter covers important matters to be finalized before the craft exhibitors return home or go elsewhere on business.

The day after the show

Settling financial matters. Bills have to be paid, particularly for on-site services. Bills not yet received should not be forgotten.

Reports. As soon as the trade fair closes, a report should be written about the commercial and practical value of the event. Craft sales figures should be listed along with any expression of interest in the products and indications of the potential of any new products. A final report, to include statistical information from the organizer, should be filed within a few weeks of the show.

Packing up. Ensure that all exhibits and equipment have been accounted for. Hired equipment may have been used, and this should be returned and deposits reclaimed.

Final publicity. If the exhibitor or national group has been successful at the trade fair, suitable press activity should be considered before leaving. This may be separate from or in liaison with an event arranged by the organizer.

Finally, if it has been decided to participate in the next show the organizer should be consulted before departing. Starting at this early stage may mean a better stand location in the hall on the following occasion. Early re-bookings are good publicity for the organizer, and there may even be the possibility of a mention in their press releases.

Following up contacts

All visitors to the stand should receive a timely follow-up soon after the exhibitor returns home. Only by prompt follow-up action can the opportunities generated by the trade fair be fully exploited. Any promises to provide samples, photographs and information on possibilities for adapting products, packaging or shipping arrangements must be attended to. The degree of follow-up will depend on the importance of the contact, ranging from a simple thank-you letter to a sales visit, telephone call or information pack. The days and weeks following the trade fair make it clear to producers who wants their business most and who may not be ready to handle it. Keeping in contact by mailing product information and greetings cards is another good way of cementing relationships.

Measuring immediate sales. Measuring the success of participation in a fair is not an easy exercise. Some of the sales generated may not materialize for some time and cannot therefore be calculated at once. Leads over three, six and even nine months should be tracked after the trade fair. Only then can the full value of the trade fair be estimated.

Keeping statistics. A measure of the effectiveness of participation will be the recorded number of trade visitors who come to the stand. The names, addresses and product interest of company representatives should be noted during the show and statistics compiled after the close of the event. Similarly, other types of statistics kept during the fair will give some indication of the interest generated by the products on display – the number of samples given out can indicate a level of interest on the ground.



Checklist for exhibition closure and follow-up

1. Exhibition closure

- Dismantling of stand
- Removal of exhibitor's materials (for return shipment or disposal)
- Payment of final accounts to organizer and other service providers

2. Evaluation of exhibition

Immediate follow-up and evaluation (in exhibition country)

- Immediate follow-up of specific contacts made during show
- Visits to existing customers (who did not visit show, to show new items)
- Market research tour for following year (in exhibition country or nearby)

General follow-up (on return to home country)

- Review exhibition
- Estimate cost-benefit: ratio of orders to investment
- Assess enterprise's performance at show
- Identify activities to be improved
- Record new or adapted product ideas
- Create new or modified ranges
- Create customer specific product/range lists
- Identify new technology requirements
- Analyse exhibition costs

3. Forward planning

- Prepare marketing plan for following year
 - Prepare product development plan for following year
 - Prepare exhibition plan for following year
 - Prepare production plan for following year
 - Calculate budget for marketing, product development and exhibitions for following year
 - Forecast expenditure on production plan
 - Identify sources of finance for marketing and production plans
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